



Exploring the Role of Positive Education in Early Childhood Education; A Pathway to Socio-Emotional Well-Being

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ABSTRACT

This paper explored how Positive Education can be used in improving the socio-emotional well-being of Early Childhood Education (ECE), specifically in the Pakistani context. Through the perspective of a qualitative research design, a document analysis, and a thematic analysis, this paper looks at global guidelines like the PERMA model and Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) among the international best practices and national policy documents, including the Single National Curriculum of Pakistan (SNC, 2020). The results showed that Positive Education has a great contribution to the emotional strength, cognitive and social growth of children. Models like the PERMA and the SEL uphold major competencies like empathy, self-regulation as well as relationship-building. The study, however, pinpoints key weaknesses in the ECE system in Pakistan such as inadequate assimilation of socio-emotional learning, inadequate teacher training, and excessive focus on academic performance. In this analysis, the author also emphasizes the necessity of the cultural adaptation of Positive Education to include indigenous values like Sabr (patience) and Shukr (gratitude) to make sure that it can be more relevant and efficient. This research paper finds that Positive Education can offer a long-lasting solution to enhance educational opportunities and future well-being as it is introduced as a part of the ECE system in Pakistan. It suggests policy changes, training of teachers and curriculum, and community engagement to facilitate successful realization of well-being-based education.

Introduction

Early childhood education (ECE) has been popularly considered as an initial phase in human development. It plays a key role in influencing cognitive, emotional, and social progress in children. At these developmental stages, the children learn important skills in life such as control of their emotions, empathy and communication with others. It is very important in not only their academic performance but also their general well-being (Robson et al., 2019). Studies also emphasize that quality early childhood results in positive consequences over time, such as high academic performance and psychological resilience, as well as social competence (Mazhar, 202). With this has come the growing awareness of the world that educational systems can no longer afford a strict academic perspective of education and instead, approaches that enable the holistic development of children are needed.

In this regard, Positive Education has come out as a disruptive form of education that brings in aspects of positive psychology in education. Positive psychology, put forth by Seligman (2011) aims at promoting wellness, strengths, and flourishing in humans. The key approach to this school of thought is called the PERMA model. It consists of Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. These aspects give all-inclusive guidelines to enhancement of well-being within learning environments. Arguably, foliar in mid-child development, the implementation of PERMA helps the learner to achieve emotional well-being, intrinsic motivation, and healthy social relationships (Storli and Sandseter, 2019).

To complete Positive Education, the framework of Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) with the focus on the development of essential competencies, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, should be done. It is a fact that SEL is an essential element of the successful education at the national level that leads not only to better academic achievements but also to increased emotional and social outcomes (Ahmed & Khan, 2024; Siraj et al., 2025). SEL is especially important in early childhood contexts during which, children are yet to learn how to interpret and manage their feelings, relate with other people, and adapt to systematic learning backgrounds (Hosokawa et al., 2024).

The world has witnessed a significant change in terms of the resolutions to include well-being and socio-emotional learning in learning policies and practice. It has been noted that countries like Australia (Little and Sweller, 2015; White and Waters, 2015) and Singapore have effectively put into place organized Positive Education models where well-being premises have been integrated into the curriculum. An example is how positive psychology has been used in Geelong grammar school to achieve better student engagement, emotional health, and achievement. Likewise, the Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) system used in Singapore focuses the education on values, emotional intelligence and social responsibility at early age (Sim, 2024). The role of the socio-emotional skills in equipping students with the demands of the 21st century has also been emphasized by international organizations (OECD, 2022). These trends can be seen as part of a more general movement to more holistic, learner-centered methods of education. Although there are these international progressions, Positive Education integration on developing countries like Pakistan has not been widespread. The traditional education system in Pakistan has focused on academic success and success in this regard has been in terms of standardized tests and scoring in examinations. Even though policy measures like the Single National Curriculum (SNC, 2020) are trying to harmonize the quality of education, the organized focus on socio-emotional learning has not been emphasized, especially in early childhood education. Even though SNC has some components of how morals and character are developed, it does not offer a detailed provision on how CASEL or Positive Education can be applied in the classroom.

This gap is also emphasized by empirical studies in Pakistan. As much as in the understanding of teachers, socio-emotional development is essential, little is known and applied in schools in terms of CASEL strategies (Ansari et al., 2024; Ahmed & Khan, 2024; Siraj et al., 2025). Educators have no sufficient knowledge, tools, and organizational backup that would enable them to support student emotional health. On the same note, Storli and Sandseter (2019) emphasized that training enhances the well-being (Cadima et al. 2021) and job satisfaction of teachers and enhances the classroom conditions and academic outcomes of students. The findings present the significance of teacher training as one of the key elements to successful implementation of Positive Education.

Along with institutional issues, socio-economic and family factors are significant in the socio-emotional growth of children. Parenting participation has become one of the most significant predisposes of emotional and social learning in children and favorable family conditions. It helps to achieve more resilience and emotional competence (Kiran, 2023). Nevertheless, there are socio-economic differences and regional inequalities in Pakistan that generate unequal educational opportunities. Research showed that there are marked disparities in availability of quality education, infrastructure, and resources in the metropolis compared to rural regions (Sajjad et al., 2022; Ansari et al., 2024). These differences are not only impacting on academic performance, but also emotional expressiveness and social growth of children.

Another imperative issue that influences the practice of education in Pakistan is cultural context. The community is highly based on the fundamentals of collectivism, religious orientations, and community cultures. The values of welcoming the change, which is expected of the indigenous people, like patience, gratitude, empathy, social responsibility are relevant to the principles of positive psychology. Integration of these values into the education systems can lead to a higher level of relevance and usefulness of a Positive Education (Veesar et al., 2024). Nonetheless, little research has been done on ways in which these cultural values can be methodically integrated into the early childhood curriculums.

Moreover, early childhood learning settings of high quality have a great influence on the socio-emotional development of children. The presence of positive teacher-child relations, emotional support, and interesting instructional practices leads to development in social and emotional skills (Hosokawa et al., 2024; Mazhar, 2025). Despite this, teacher training, infrastructure and the availability of resources are not consistent throughout Pakistan, which poses a challenge to the

provision of high quality ECE environment. Therefore, the present study fits into this context and tends to conduct research on the influence of Positive Education on socio-emotional well-being among early childhood education in Pakistan. By conducting qualitative research grounded on literature review and document analysis, the study can discover major themes and findings, as well as insights on the topic of Positive Education integration in ECE. Finally, Positive Education can be incorporated in the education system in Pakistan and improve both technology transfer of academic achievements and high-level well-being due to possible holistic development of childhood education.

Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to explore the role of Positive Education in enhancing socio-emotional well-being in Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Pakistan.

Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze how the Positive Education frameworks, namely PERMA and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), contribute to socio-emotional development in early childhood.
2. To examine the examples of Positive Education in education in early childhood and discover the main strategies that promote the welfare of children.
3. To explore culturally relevant adaptations of Positive Education using indigenous values.

Research Questions

1. How do Positive Education frameworks (PERMA and CASEL) contribute to socio-emotional well-being in early childhood education?
2. What are the lessons that are learned about models of global Positive Education that can be used to promote well-being amongst young learners?
3. What are the ways to positively modify Positive Education to fit the Pakistani ECE setting to fill the gaps and improve the process of socio-emotional well-being?

Significance of Study

This study is important because it shows the need to incorporate Positive Education in Early Childhood Education (ECE) to develop socio-emotional wellbeing of children in Pakistan. It adds to the body of existing research by putting the global frameworks, including PERMA and CASEL into the context of Pakistani culture. The research can give some information to policy makers to embed the well-being-based strategies in the Single National Curriculum (SNC). It is also practical in the advice given to teachers that it is necessary to be trained in the aspect of socio-emotional learning. In addition, the study encourages culturally competent methods as it incorporates the twins of indigenous culture; Sabr and Shukr, thus fostering the holistic wellbeing of children and the ability to withstand in the long-term.

Literature Review

Conceptualizing Positive Education in Early Childhood

Positive Education is a new discipline that incorporates concepts of positive psychology into education to foster academic and psychological prosperity. Positive Education is based on the theory of flourishing by Seligman (2011), which lays focus on the concept of developing strengths, positive emotions, and meaningful involvement in learning. The Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment model (also termed as PERMA) is a baseline model that can be used to explain well-being in the educational fields. Some research indicated that the inclusion of all these aspects in early childhood education (ECE) is capable of meaningfully improving the emotional sustainability, motivation, and interpersonal efficiency of the children (Baker et al., 2017; Robson et al., 2019; Kamal and Gabr, 2023).

The first stage in the application of Positive Education is the early childhood stage. It is the stage within which the social-emotional competencies are developed. Research has found that well-being programs during early years have long-term positive effects on the academic achievements and psychological well-being of children (Robson et al., 2019; Benoit & Gabola, 2021; Mazhar, 2025). Positive Education within ECE is aimed at fostering learning environments, being inquisitive and expressive, and social. The environment helps children grow a strong sense of self and form positive relationships with their peers as well as teachers (Kamal and Gabr, 2023). Besides, Positive Education is consistent with the modern trends in education which focus not only on academic success but also on the aspects of the holistic wellbeing of students. According to

Gomez-Baya and Gillham (2019), Positive Education incorporates different fields such as character education, Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), and well-being science to deliver holistic learning experiences. This compound method is especially applicable in the early childhood classroom, where learning is also social and experiential.

PERMA Model and Child Well-Being

The PERMA model has found extended use in educational studies as a model of well-being comprehension and advancement. The individual elements of PERMA are very important in childhood education. Positive emotions contribute to the resiliency, solving difficulties in children, finding deep knowledge and intrinsic driving in engagement. The reason is that relationships play the key role in the social wellbeing of children, as the latter can build relationships and develop empathy. Purpose and achievement always result in meaning and accomplishment, which are key to the long-term well-being (Seligman, 2011).

Efforts have been shown to be effective in early child education using interventions that are based on PERMA. As an example, Turner et al. (2023) discovered that elements of PERMA have a strong correlation with the well-being, resilience, and the mental health outcomes of children. In a similar manner, it was proven by Subramanyam et al. (2024) that the incorporation of shaping emotions towards assessment (PERMA) into classroom activities can increase self-regulation and emotional competence of children. These results point to the prospects of PERMA as a multifaceted tool for fostering socio-emotional growth in young learners. Moreover, the issue of teacher well-being is highly important in the effective introduction of the practices of PERMA-based practice. According to Cadima et al. (2021), educators with greater well-being can deliver emotional support and develop favorable learning conditions by being better prepared to support. This highlights the interdependence between teachers and student welfare and implies that the process of intervention must focus on both at the same time.

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) in Early Childhood

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is another key framework that complements Positive Education. CASEL aims at acquisition of the essential competencies, namely, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship, and responsible decision making. These competencies play a crucial role in the academic performance of children and their well-being (Duan et al., 2020; Mufatihah et al., 2026). Studies have always demonstrated that the CASEL programs positively affect emotional and social wellbeing of children). Systematic reviews show that students attending CASEL programs have shown better academic performance, emotional regulation and interpersonal skills. EL allows children to gain the skills on how to control their emotions, handle conflicts, and to cooperate in the early childhood environments (Becker et al., 2017). Moreover, CASEL is closely related to the values of Positive Education. Both models underline the value of establishing a positive relationship, the emotional state and individual wellbeing (Hosokawa et al., 2024; Mufatihah et al., 2026). According to Karakasidou et al. (2025), successful implementation of Positive Education depends on teachers' classroom practices, professional preparedness, and supportive school environments ECE is one of the areas where this integration is crucial and children would acquire some basic social and emotional skills.

Global Practices of Positive Education

Globally, several education systems have successfully implemented Positive Education frameworks through structured and contextually embedded approaches. Among the most prominent examples is Geelong Grammar School in Australia, which has integrated positive psychology into its curriculum through a whole-school model. This includes practical classroom strategies such as mindfulness activities, gratitude exercises, and strength-based learning, enabling students to actively develop emotional well-being, engagement, and academic competence (White & Waters, 2015; Little & Sweller, 2015). Similarly, Singapore's Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) framework emphasizes values education, emotional intelligence, and social responsibility through structured activities such as role-playing, collaborative learning, and reflective discussions (Sim, 2024). In this system, Cognitive and Social-Emotional Learning (CASEL) is systematically embedded within the national curriculum, ensuring that socio-emotional wellbeing is prioritized alongside academic achievement. International organizations such as the OECD further reinforce the importance of these approaches by highlighting that socio-emotional skills—such as adaptability, collaboration, and problem-solving—are essential for success in the 21st century (OECD, 2022).

However, in contrast to these structured models, Pakistan's education system reflects limited practical implementation of Positive Education. While policy documents such as the Single National Curriculum (SNC, 2020) acknowledge moral and character wellbeing, they lack clear guidelines and classroom-based strategies for integrating CASEL and well-being practices. For instance, unlike Australian or Singaporean classrooms where children engage in emotional expression and collaborative activities, Pakistani classrooms often emphasize rote learning and teacher-centered instruction, providing fewer opportunities for developing socio-emotional competencies. This highlights a gap between policy and practice, particularly due to limited teacher training and lack of structured frameworks (Siraj et al., 2025).

The effectiveness of Positive Education interventions is further supported by systematic reviews. For example, Benoit and Gabola (2021) found that positive psychology interventions in early childhood significantly improve well-being and social functioning. Similarly, Waters and Loton (2019) reported that Positive Education programs enhance emotional regulation, resilience, and life satisfaction among students. Despite these positive outcomes, researchers emphasize that the successful implementation of Positive Education depends on contextual factors, including cultural, social, and institutional dynamics. Therefore, while global models provide valuable insights, their adaptation to local contexts—such as integrating indigenous values like *sabr* and *shukr* in Pakistan—is essential to ensure relevance, acceptance, and long-term effectiveness.

Positive Education and Child Well-Being (CASEL Framework)

Child well-being is a central outcome of Positive Education, particularly when understood through the CASEL framework, which emphasizes the development of core socio-emotional competencies such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Research indicates that children's socio-emotional development is strongly influenced by the quality of classroom environments and interactions, which shape their emotional security, confidence, and ability to engage in learning (Berger et al., 2022). In early childhood settings, positive and supportive interactions foster trust, belonging, and emotional competence, enabling children to regulate their emotions and build meaningful relationships.

Furthermore, the CASEL framework highlights those structured opportunities for practicing socio-emotional skills—such as expressing emotions, resolving conflicts, and cooperating with peers—lead to improved emotional regulation, empathy, and academic engagement (Murray et al., 2025). Conversely, the absence of supportive learning environments can hinder children's emotional well-being and negatively affect their learning outcomes (Murray et al., 2025; Hosokawa et al., 2024). Positive Education interventions, aligned with CASEL principles, therefore play a crucial role in promoting holistic child development by embedding socio-emotional learning into everyday classroom practices. This approach ensures that children not only achieve academically but also develop the emotional and social competencies necessary for lifelong success (Rees, 2017; Shoshani, 2024).

Positive Education in Pakistan: Current State

In Pakistan, the integration of Positive Education and CASEL in early childhood education remains limited. Education system has been emphasized on academic success since time immemorial, neglecting socio-emotional progress. Although the Single National Curriculum (SNC, 2020) has some components of moral and character education, it does not have a codified way of applying both CASEL and Positive Education practices. Studies in the Pakistani setting indicated that there are several challenges. Siraj et al. (2025) discovered that the level of teacher awareness about CASEL concepts is low, and teachers do not have the necessary training to put them into practical use. Likewise, Kiran (2023) also focused on the importance of parental engagement in the development of the socio-emotional status of children, which means that family background determines the results of the learning process significantly. Socio-economic lifespan also makes implementing Positive Education in Pakistan not so easy. The research indicates that underprivileged children have fewer chances to receive good education, and favorable learning conditions (Sajjad et al., 2022; Ansari et al., 2024). These differences are not only limited to academic success but also to affect emotional health.

Cultural Context and Indigenous Values

The cultural and religious heritage of the Pakistani setting can be considered one of its peculiarities. *Sabr* (patience), *Shukr* (gratitude), empathy, and community support are among the values entrenched in the society. These values dominate the principles of positive psychology and form a good base in ensuring that culturally relative models of Positive Education are formulated. Veesar et al. (2024) noted that inclusion of the indigenous values in education systems makes them more effective. When education plays a role in teaching through cultural values, teachers will be able to develop meaningful and contextually relevant learning. This is not only a well-being promotion strategy but helps in cultural identity and establishing social unity. Nevertheless, not much research has been done on how these values could be incorporated in early childhood curriculum in a systematic manner. This gap is a focus of the possibility of further studies and innovation in the sphere of Positive Education in Pakistan.

Methodology

Research Design

This paper utilizes a qualitative research design to understand the contribution of Positive Education in increasing the socio-emotional well-being in Early Childhood Education (ECE) in the Pakistani context. In this study, a qualitative method was more suitable because it provided an in-depth conceptualization, framework, and triangulation of the context instead of

depending on the use of the numbers. Certainly, qualitative research was especially appropriate when studying complex education outcomes like well-being, emotional development, and cultural adaptation since it cannot be satisfactorily assessed using only quantitative indicators (Xu & Zammit, 2020). In particular, the study applied an analysis of documents method that was complemented with the thematic analysis to investigate the available literature, policy documents, and international case studies dedicated to Positive Education, PERMA, and Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). Document analysis enables researchers to review and interpret written documents in an organized manner to obtain important insights into a research problem (Morgan, 2022). This methodology was appropriate in this study, since it is aimed at the synthesis of the current knowledge and discovering trends among various sources.

Research Approach

The study was based on an interpretivist paradigm because it focused on the interpretation of meanings, experiences and social realities, which are formed by human interaction. In that regard, the study aims at interpreting how Positive Education conceptual frameworks, implementation, and modifications were carried out and adapted in diverse educational environments, specifically in Pakistan. The interpretivist method was consistent with the aim of the study, which was to discuss the socio-emotional well-being as a phenomenon that depends on time and should be viewed as a subjective phenomenon.

Data Collection

The data that was used in this study was gathered by using various secondary sources in a bid to understand the research topic comprehensively. Peer-reviewed journal articles containing empirical and theoretical information regarding Positive Education, and policy documents such as the Single National Curriculum (2020), which presented a view on Pakistan-wide perspective of early childhood learning were used as sources. Moreover, the international organizations, such as OECD, provided reports and were examined to obtain information regarding the global trends and frameworks in the domain of socio-emotional learning and well-being. The research also involved case studies on implementation of Positive Education where example studies in Geelong grammar school and character and citizenship education (CCE) framework of Singapore were included to determine best practices.

Inclusion Criteria

The relevant documents were selected by the following criteria:

- Studies focusing on Positive Education, PERMA, or CASEL
- Research related to early childhood education (ages 3–10)
- Studies published between 2010 and 2025 to ensure relevance
- Research conducted in global and Pakistani contexts
- Peer-reviewed articles and credible institutional reports

Exclusion Criteria

- Studies not related to education or early education
- Articles lacking empirical or theoretical relevance
- Non-academic or non-credible sources

The selection of documents that directly handled the research objectives was done via purposive sampling strategy. This helped in ensuring that the data was relevant in addition to being content rich in terms of thematic analysis.

Search Strategy

A structured literature search of different academic databases, such as Google Scholar, Springer, ScienceDirect, or ERIC has been adopted during the data collection process to make sure that the related literature should be covered completely. The search was organized with the help of a set of keywords carefully selected, among which were: “Positive Education in early childhood”, “PERMA model in education”, “Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)”, “ECE in Pakistan”, and “well-being in early childhood education”. The keywords helped in locating relevant studies according to the objectives of the research. Using this, relevant articles and documents were downloaded and placed to be analyzed. The

selected documents were read on several occasions to form a comprehensive understanding of what was included in them, as well as find important concepts and recurring ideas connected to the topic of the research as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Literature Search and document review process

Data Analysis Method: Thematic Analysis

The analysis of the documents that were collected is conducted through reflexive thematic analysis, which is offered by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2021). Thematic analysis is a qualitative technique that is popular in identifying, examining and interpreting patterns (themes) in data. It is well adapted to this research because it gives leeway in interpreting various data sources and enables one to come up with meaningful interpretations. Braun and Clarke describe thematic analysis as a process with 6 phases:

Phase 1: Familiarization with Data

The researcher also undertook the act of re-reading the documents chosen to get a clear overview of the information. The early notes and observations made at this phase were to draw possible patterns and concepts.

Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes

At this stage, pertinent portions of information were purposefully coded. Coding entailed the identification of meaningful textual units regarding Positive Education, social-emotional wellbeing, teacher roles, cultural values as well as policy gaps. Semantic (explicit) and latent (interpretive) codes were both produced (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017).

Phase 3: Searching for Themes

The codes were then moved under broader categories to generate first themes. As an illustration, the codes about emotional wellbeing, resilience and well-being were combined into themes, like Holistic Child Development and Socio-Emotional Learning.

Phase 4: Reviewing Themes

The identified themes were revisited and narrowed down to give it some sense of coherence and consistency. This entailed the question of whether the themes were able to reflect the data and whether the data provided had enough materials to support the themes or not.

Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes

All the themes were well identified and defined to represent the essence of the themes. Subthemes were further created to give a more elaborate meaning of every major theme.

Phase 6: Producing the Report

The last step was to summarize the themes and to present them as a logical narrative and connect them to the research questions and the theoretical framework. Supporting evidence of the literature was used to present the findings. Such an orderly solution provided a strict and systematic study of the data which added credibility and reliability to the study (Byrne, 2022).

Trustworthiness of the Study

The research is conducted according to the best standards of trustworthiness in qualitative research, such as credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability to obtain the quality and rigor of the research.

1. Credibility

There were various data sources that have been utilized to ensure credibility, such as academic articles, policy documents, and case studies. This triangulation increases the validity of the outcomes.

2. Dependability

The research process was transparent and clear with clear recording of data collection and analysis processes. This will assess the possibility of duplicating and validating the research.

3. Confirmability

The researcher kept the level of bias at minimum as he based the interpretations on the data and offered support of various sources. There was upholding of reflexivity throughout the course of the research.

4. Transferability

Though, the research will make concentration on Pakistan, the research findings can be extrapolated to other developing countries whereby education circumstances are similar in Pakistan. Transferability is supported by detailed descriptions of the situation and results.

Ethical Considerations

Since the research is a secondary research paper, there will be no human interaction in this research. Nonetheless, the ethical issues were observed by:

- Citing every source correctly to prevent plagiarism.
- Applying plausible and legitimate academic resources.
- Proper representation of ideas of the authors.

Findings

The thematic analysis of the chosen literature and documents made it possible to identify five core themes and some subthemes regarding the role of Positive Education in promoting socio-emotional well-being in Early Childhood Education (ECE). These themes are in line with the trends found in the world frameworks, research studies and the Pakistani education environment.

Table 1 Code-to- Theme Mapping

Initial Codes	Categories	Final Themes
Positive emotions, resilience, confidence, engagement, positive behavior, respect cooperation	Emotional wellbeing, cognitive and academic benefit, development of positive behavior	Positive Education as a Foundation for Holistic Child Wellbeing
Self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, relationship skills	Foster joy and interest, self-control, Socio-emotional competencies, relationship and empathy	Role of PERMA and CASEL in Socio-Emotional Learning
Whole-school approach, policy support, teacher practices	Geelong Grammar School, the Character and Citizenship Education	Global Models of Positive Education

Initial Codes	Categories	Final Themes
Teacher training, policy gaps, academic pressure	Implementation barriers	Gaps in Pakistan's Early Childhood Education System
Patience, gratitude, family support, community values	Cultural adaptation, Indigenous practices	Cultural Adaptation of Positive Education in Pakistan

Theme 1: Positive Education as a Foundation for Holistic Child Wellbeing

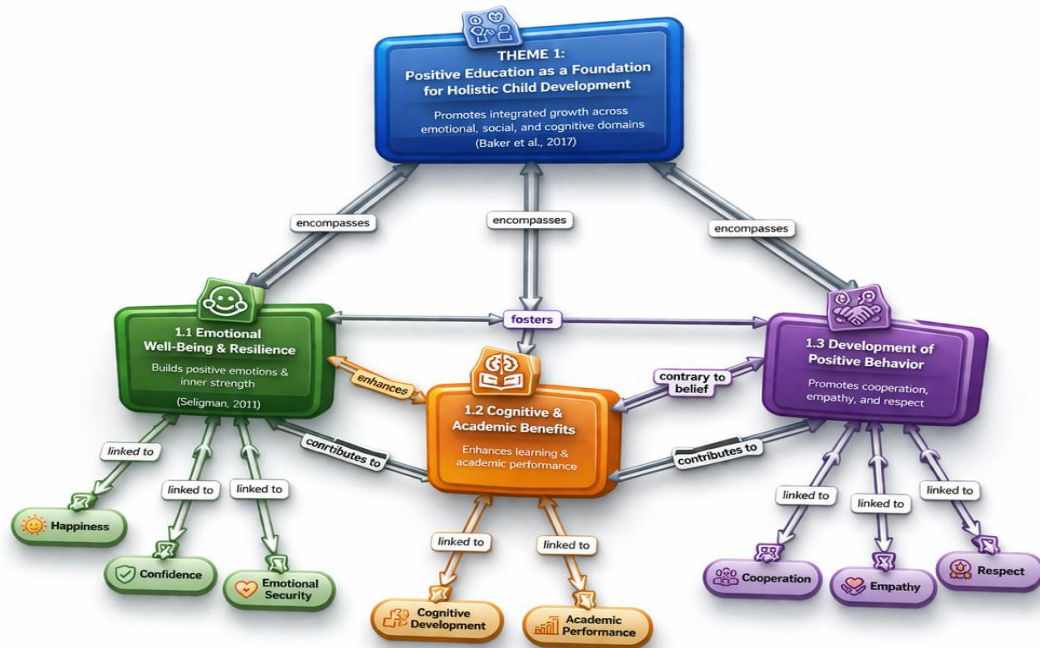


Figure 2: Thematic Representation of Positive Education as a Foundation for Holistic Child Wellbeing

The thematic analysis of the selected literature identified Holistic Child Wellbeing as one of the most consistent themes across the reviewed documents, during the coding process, recurring concepts such as positive emotions, emotional resilience, engagement, confidence, empathy, cooperation, and academic motivation were grouped under this overarching theme. The synthesis of these codes suggests that Positive Education is consistently associated with children's holistic development across emotional, social, and cognitive domains. Also, Across the reviewed documents, emotional resilience emerged as a recurring code, indicating that well-being-oriented educational practices consistently support children's emotional development (Baker et al., 2017). Education is known to promote positive effects like happiness, confidence, and emotional security in terms of emotional well-being, which helps children to attain resilience and successfully manage difficulties. The PERMA model, in its turn, also puts significance on the role of positive feelings as one of the fundamental parts of well-being, especially in early childhood when the basics of emotional stability are made (Seligman, 2011). The thematic synthesis also indicated that socio-emotional learning and academic development were consistently presented as complementary rather than main competing outcomes. Children that are emotionally regulated and have high skills in engagement are more likely to be attentive, motivated and engaged in what is occurring in the classroom. Also, the Positive Education integrated is being implicated in shaping positive behavior, such as cooperation, empathy, and respect, necessary to consider appropriate to generate a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

Theme 2: Role of PERMA and CASEL in Socio-Emotional Learning

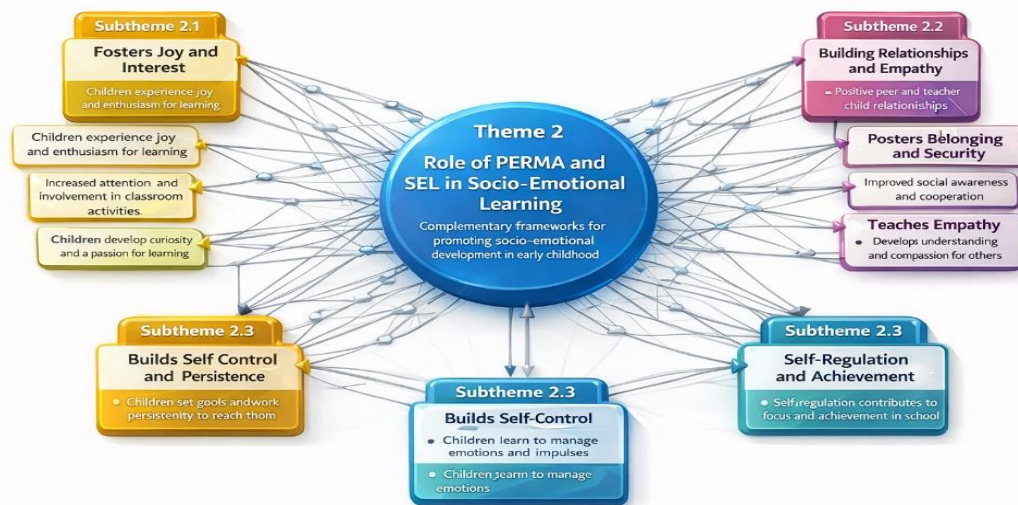


Figure 3: Thematic Framework of PERMA and CASEL in Promoting Socio-Emotional Learning in Early Childhood

The analysis identified a second major theme regarding the complementary role of the PERMA model and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework in promoting socio-emotional learning, during coding, recurring concepts including positive emotions, engagement, self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, social awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation were consistently identified across the reviewed literature. These codes were then combined into a broader theme reflecting the contribution of PERMA and CASEL to children's socio-emotional development.

The thematic synthesis indicated that PERMA and CASEL consistently emerged as a complementary frameworks supporting socio-emotional well-being in early childhood education. Across the reviewed studies, positive emotions and active engagement were among the most frequently identified codes, signifying that emotionally supportive learning environments encourage children's participation, motivation, and sustained interest in learning.

Relationship skills and social awareness also emerged as recurring analytical codes, highlighting the importance of positive teacher-child and peer relationships in fostering children's sense of belonging, emotional security, and empathy (Siraj et al., 2025). Another recurring code identified during the analysis was self-regulation, indicating that both PERMA and CASEL emphasize children's ability to understand and regulate emotions, manage behaviour, and develop purposeful learning habits. Overall, the synthesis suggests that these interconnected competencies contribute simultaneously to children's personal development the integrated nature of socio-emotional learning within Positive Education.

Theme 3: Global Models of Positive Education

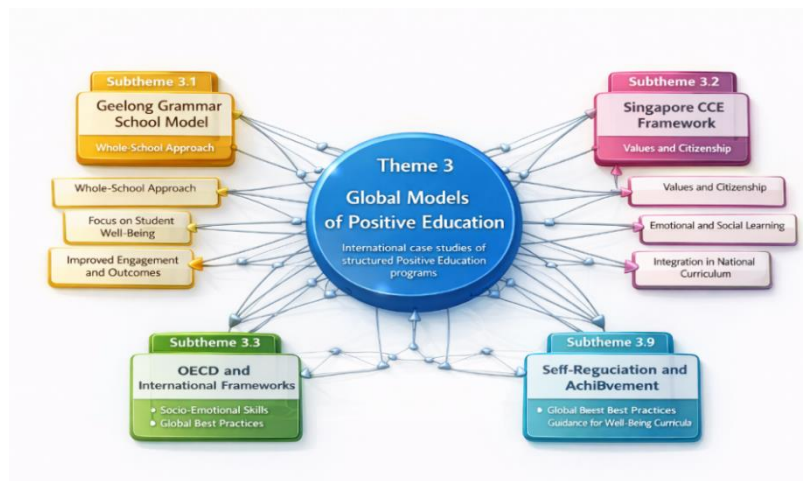


Figure 4: Global Models of Positive Education: Comparative Thematic Overview of International Practices

The third theme generated by this analysis highlighted international models of positive education. During coding, recurring concepts such as whole-school approach, policy support, curriculum integration, teacher capacity building, student well-being, and institutional commitment were repeatedly identified across international case studies, these codes were combined into the theme of Global Models of Positive Education. The thematic synthesis proved that internationally, Positive Education is most effective when implemented through structured, whole-school approaches supported by educational policies and institutional commitment.

Across the reviewed case studies, the Geelong Grammar School in Australia consistently illustrated how curriculum-wide implementation of Positive Education contributes to student well-being, engagement, and academic development (White & Waters, 2015). Equally, the Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) model of Singapore focuses on the values education, emotional growth, and social responsibility, and thus the significance of introducing Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) into the national curriculum. The importance of institutional support in successful implementation of Positive Education is highlighted by this approach. The analysis further showed that international policy organizations consistently advocate the integration of socio-emotional competencies into education systems, reinforcing the importance of policy-level support for Positive Education.

Theme 4: Gaps in Pakistan's Early Childhood Education System

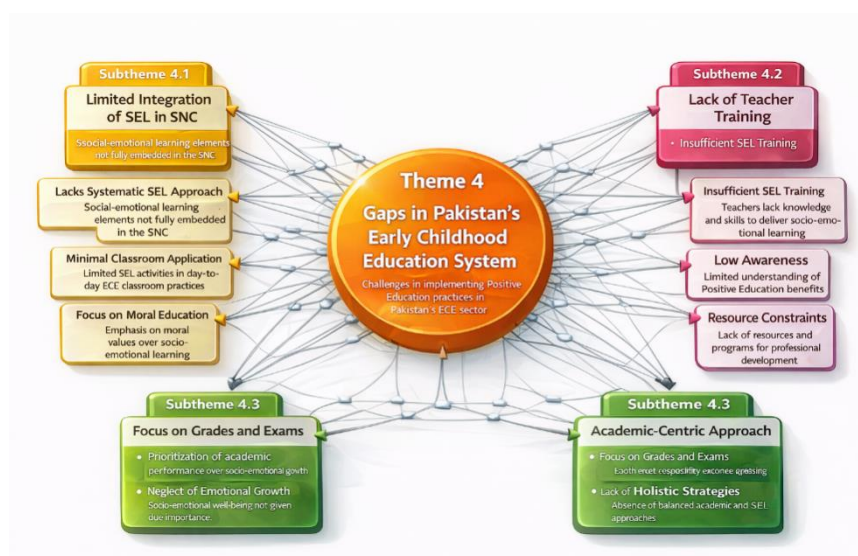


Figure 5: Identified Gaps in Pakistan's Early Childhood Education System: A Thematic Analysis

One of the most important themes developed during the analysis process is the absence of a systematized adoption of Positive Education into the Pakistani educational system working with early childhood education (ECE). The fourth theme emerged from codes related to implementation challenges within Pakistan's Early Childhood Education system. Frequently occurring codes included policy gaps, limited teacher training, academic pressure, inadequate classroom implementation, and insufficient socio-emotional learning practices, these were grouped under the broader theme describing systemic barriers to Positive Education and the thematic analysis identified limited institutional implementation as one of the most consistent barriers to integrating Positive Education within Pakistan's ECE system. The results show that the socio-emotional competencies are not directly integrated in the teaching practices, which constrain their application abilities in early learning settings. Teacher preparedness also emerged as a recurring code, indicating that limited professional development reduces educators' capacity to implement PERMA and CASEL-based classroom practices effectively. Moreover, another relevant challenge is the absence of teacher training since teachers do not usually have the aspects of knowledge and skills to successfully apply SEL and Positive Education strategies. Studies demonstrate the low understanding and readiness of teachers towards such methods (Siraj et al., 2025). The synthesis further indicated that an examination-oriented educational culture often prioritizes academic achievement rather than socio-emotional development, reducing opportunities for children to develop emotional regulation, empathy, and Interpersonal competence.

Theme 5: Cultural Adaptation of Positive Education in Pakistan

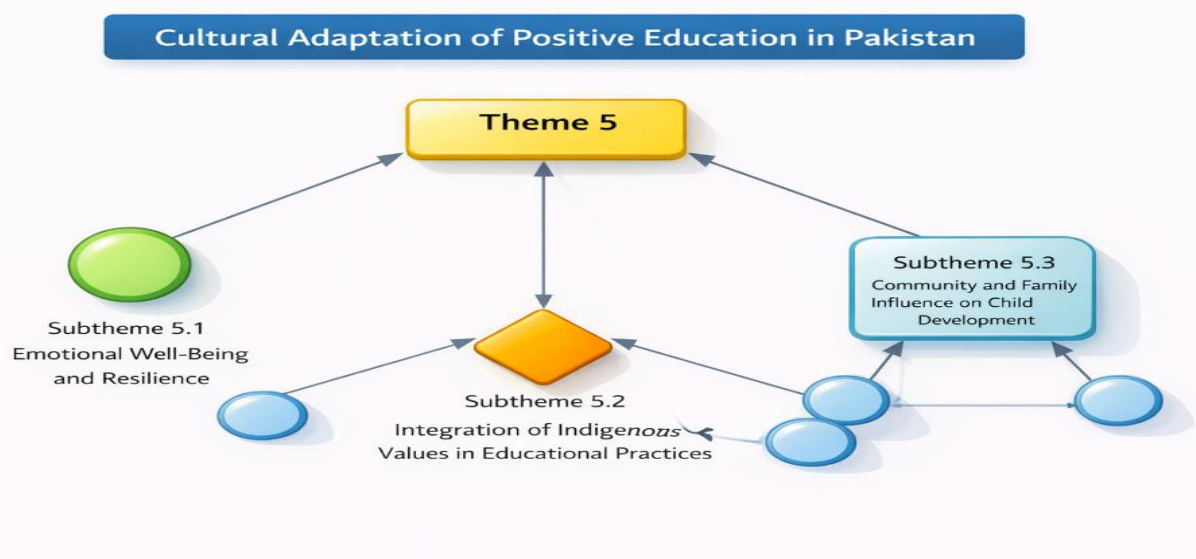


Figure 6: Cultural and Policy Integration of Positive Education in Pakistan: Thematic Model of Adaptation Strategies

The final theme emphasized the cultural adaptation of Positive Education within the Pakistani context. Codes such as Sabr, gratitude (Shukr), empathy, family support, community responsibility, indigenous values, and cultural relevance were recurrently identified and synthesized into a culturally responsive framework for Positive Education. The thematic synthesis specified that cultural adaptation is essential for the sustainable implementation of Positive Education within Pakistan's Early Childhood Education system. Across the analyzed documents, indigenous values such as patience and gratitude (Sabr & Shukr), empathy, and collective responsibility consistently emerged as culturally compatible with the principles of Positive Psychology and socio-emotional learning. The integration of these values into the applied approach to education will allow boosting the ethical growth and emotional well-being of children in a culturally significant manner (Veesar et al., 2024). Furthermore, a crucial role is played by family and community, which is the socio-emotional wellbeing of children that is closely affected by social environment, as well as parents (Kiran, 2023). This approach would help address the disjuncture between theory and practice so that well-being education would become a relevant yet effective part of the Pakistani early childhood education system. The document analysis showed that Positive Education has been identified as a powerful strategy aimed at promoting socio-emotional well-being around the whole world, but this method has not been exercised intensively in Pakistan because of the policy gaps, insufficient teacher training, and academic-based system. Yet there is a good chance due to the high cultural value rates to create a localized construct of Positive Education incorporating global models and local practices.

Discussion

The present study explored the role of Positive Education in enhancing socio-emotional well-being in Early Childhood Education (ECE) within the Pakistani context. The findings generated through thematic analysis indicate that internationally recognised frameworks, particularly PERMA and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), provide a strong foundation for promoting children's holistic well-being. At the same time, the findings highlight major implementation gaps within Pakistan's ECE system, particularly in relation to policy support, teacher preparedness, and the contextual adaptation of Positive Education practices.

These findings are consistent with previous research indicating that children's emotional, social, and cognitive development is supported by Positive Education. Baker et al. (2017) similarly argued that Positive Education creates learning environments that foster resilience, positive relationships, and holistic development during early childhood. Likewise, Seligman (2011) proposed through the PERMA model that positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment collectively contribute to human flourishing. The present findings extend this perspective by suggesting that these principles are equally relevant within the Pakistani ECE context, although their implementation requires stronger policy support and teacher preparation.

The important finding identified Positive Education as a foundation for holistic child wellbeing. The reviewed evidence consistently showed that emotionally supportive learning environments promote children's emotional security, social competence, and engagement in learning. The findings further suggest that socio-emotional development should not be viewed as isolated from academic learning; rather, both dimensions reinforce one another during early childhood. This highlights the importance of integrating wellbeing-oriented practices into everyday classroom experiences rather than treating them as separate intervention.

Another important finding of the study highlights the complementary roles of the PERMA model and the CASEL framework in promoting socio-emotional learning during early childhood. The findings suggest that positive emotions, engagement, supportive relationships, and self-regulation collectively contribute to children's overall wellbeing and classroom adjustment. These findings are consistent with previous studies showing that social and emotional learning enhances children's emotional regulation, relationship skills, empathy, and learning engagement (Hosokawa et al., 2024; Becker et al., 2017). While PERMA provides a comprehensive framework for understanding wellbeing, CASEL offers practical competencies that enable teachers to translate wellbeing principles into everyday classroom practice.

The findings further revealed that international models of Positive Education provide valuable lessons for strengthening socio-emotional wellbeing in early childhood education. Evidence from Australia and Singapore shows that successful implementation depends on integrating wellbeing into curriculum design, teacher practices, and whole-school policies rather than introducing isolated classroom activities. For example, the Positive Education approach adopted by Geelong Grammar School illustrates how a whole-school commitment to wellbeing can enhance student engagement (White & Waters, 2015). Similarly, Singapore's Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) framework determines how socio-emotional learning can be entrenched within the national curriculum through structured values education and classroom practice (Sim, 2024). These international experiences suggest that sustainable implementation requires strong policy commitment, teacher capacity building, and constant institutional provision.

The main strength of the research is the fact that it has revealed gaps in the ECE system in Pakistan. These observations are consistent with evidence reported by Siraj et al. (2025), who found that Pakistani teacher educators recognise the importance of socio-emotional learning but have limited understanding of its classroom implementation. Collectively, these findings suggest that strengthening teacher professional development and embedding Positive Education within curriculum policy are essential steps towards improving children's socio-emotional wellbeing.

The final finding suggests that in Pakistan, the long-term success of Positive Education depends on its cultural relevance. Rather than adopting international frameworks without modification, the findings indicate that integrating indigenous values such as patience (Sabr), gratitude (Shukr), empathy, and collective responsibility can make Positive Education more significant within Pakistani early childhood classrooms. The findings also emphasise the important role of families and communities in strengthening children's socio-emotional development beyond the school environment. These observations are supported by Veesar et al. (2024), who highlighted the contribution of positive psychology-based parenting to children's emotional development, and by Kiran (2023), who identified parental involvement as an important factor influencing children's social-emotional learning.

The argument also identifies the relevance of a localized approach to Positive Education which entails consideration of global frameworks and local realities. Although both PERMA and SEL have remarkable theoretical contributions; to be successfully

implemented in Pakistan, these models must be applied to the context of the socio-cultural environment of the country, resource distribution, and the education system. This entails coming up with culturally appropriate curricula, training of the teachers and policy endorsement of well-being training. Concerning the research questions, the results indicate that the Positive Education frameworks play a major role in promoting socio-emotional well-being during early childhood through the promotion of emotional resilience, engagement, and social competence. The global models can be useful in terms of the understanding of effective practices but their implementation in Pakistan cannot be properly realized because of the contextual problems. Thus, it is necessary to modify these structures according to the local cultural values and educational requirements to get positive results.

Overall, this research supports the significance of the introduction of Positive Education to the early childhood learning process as a tool of holistic wellbeing and sustainable well-being advancement. Although world experience demonstrates the success of the systems of PERMA and SEL, their application to the Pakistani context needs to be context-sensitive to cover existing gaps and utilize the cultural advantages. Positive Education can change the situation in ECE in Pakistan and help to produce strong, emotionally intelligent, and socially responsible people by bridging the myriad between theory, policy, and practice.

Conclusion

This study has discussed the importance of Positive Education in improving the socio-emotional well-being of Early Childhood Education (ECE) especially in the Pakistani context. The results indicate that Positive Education, aided by frameworks, including PERMA and Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), are influential in contributing to holistic child wellbeing through the contribution of emotional resilience, cognitive learning and positive social behavior. All these structures add to the acquisition of the most important life skills, such as self-regulation, empathy, and relationship-building, which are essential in the initial years of learning.

Based on the gap analysis of global models, it is possible to note that systematic application of well-being-oriented learning can result in better academic and emotional results. Nevertheless, the study also finds that the ECE system of Pakistan has serious gaps, most of which consist in the insufficient consideration of socio-emotional learning in Single National Curriculum (SNC), teacher preparation, and excessive focus on academic performance. The challenges mean that the intentions of the policies are not reflected in the classroom practices, and this limits the application of Positive Education.

Notably, the research indicates the necessity of having a culturally responsive approach to Positive Education in Pakistan. The perfusion of local culture like *sabr* (patience), *shukr* (gratitude) and community-based learning provide a significant avenue to the localization of international frameworks in the local realities. With the help of matching Positive Education to the values of culture and society, one would be able to establish more effective and applicable educational activities.

To sum up, the inclusion of Positive Education into the system of early childhood education in Pakistan can potentially change the learning experiences both in terms of academic achievements and socio-emotional health. To do so, it is necessary to use a holistic approach encompassing all elements of the curriculum reform, teacher preparation, and policy underpinning, as well as the integration of culturally focused practices. This can help in such endeavors drive the growth of strong, emotionally mature, and socially responsible citizens, which will eventually enhance the education base in Pakistan.

Limitations of the Study

The study has certain limitations despite the strengths. As this qualitative study was based on document analysis, the findings are limited to evidence available in published literature, policy documents, and selected case studies. The study did not include primary data from teachers, parents, or children. Future research may employ qualitative fieldwork or mixed-method designs to examine the implementation of Positive Education practices within Pakistani early childhood classroom

Future Suggestions

Several suggestions are made in this research after the results of the study to enhance the incorporation of Positive Education in Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Pakistan. To begin with, some changes to the level of policies are necessary to make sure that socio-emotional learning is incorporated in the education system systematically. There should also be building of national guidelines by the policymakers that lead to the significance of socio-emotional wellbeing as well as academic achievement.

Secondly, teacher training and building professionalism must be of priority. The role of teachers is very fundamental in the application of Positive Education; that is, the modules on emotional well-being, classroom relations, and CASEL strategies need to be provided in pre-service and in-service training programs. Teachers can be subjected to workshops, ongoing

professional wellbeing and mentoring systems that would offer them the skills to support and nurture in the learning environment.

Third, the curriculum should be developed in a comprehensive manner including well-being-oriented activity as a part of the day-to-day classroom activity. This could involve mindfulness practice, narrative, group learning and play as activities that enhance emotional and social expression and empathy. This type of practice can assist children in acquiring necessary skills in life at a tender age.

Fourthly, culturally responsive education should be encouraged through the implementation of indigenous values like sabr (patience), shukr (gratitude), and collaboration within a community in the classroom. Positive Education is a promising solution that can be used in the Pakistani context to promote its acceptance and effectiveness in alignment with the local culture and religion.

Fifth, there should be enhanced parental and community involvement. Parents should also be involved in the schools based through awareness programs and workshops to foster the socio-emotional progress of children at home. The schools and communities can work together to form a unified and supportive setting to the holistic wellbeing of children.

Lastly, the future research can be dedicated to the implementation of the empirical studies in Pakistani classrooms to analyze the application of Positive Education interventions and their effectiveness. Mixed-method and longitudinal studies can help us get better insights into the effects of socio-emotional learning on the academic achievement and in the long-term welfare of children.

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